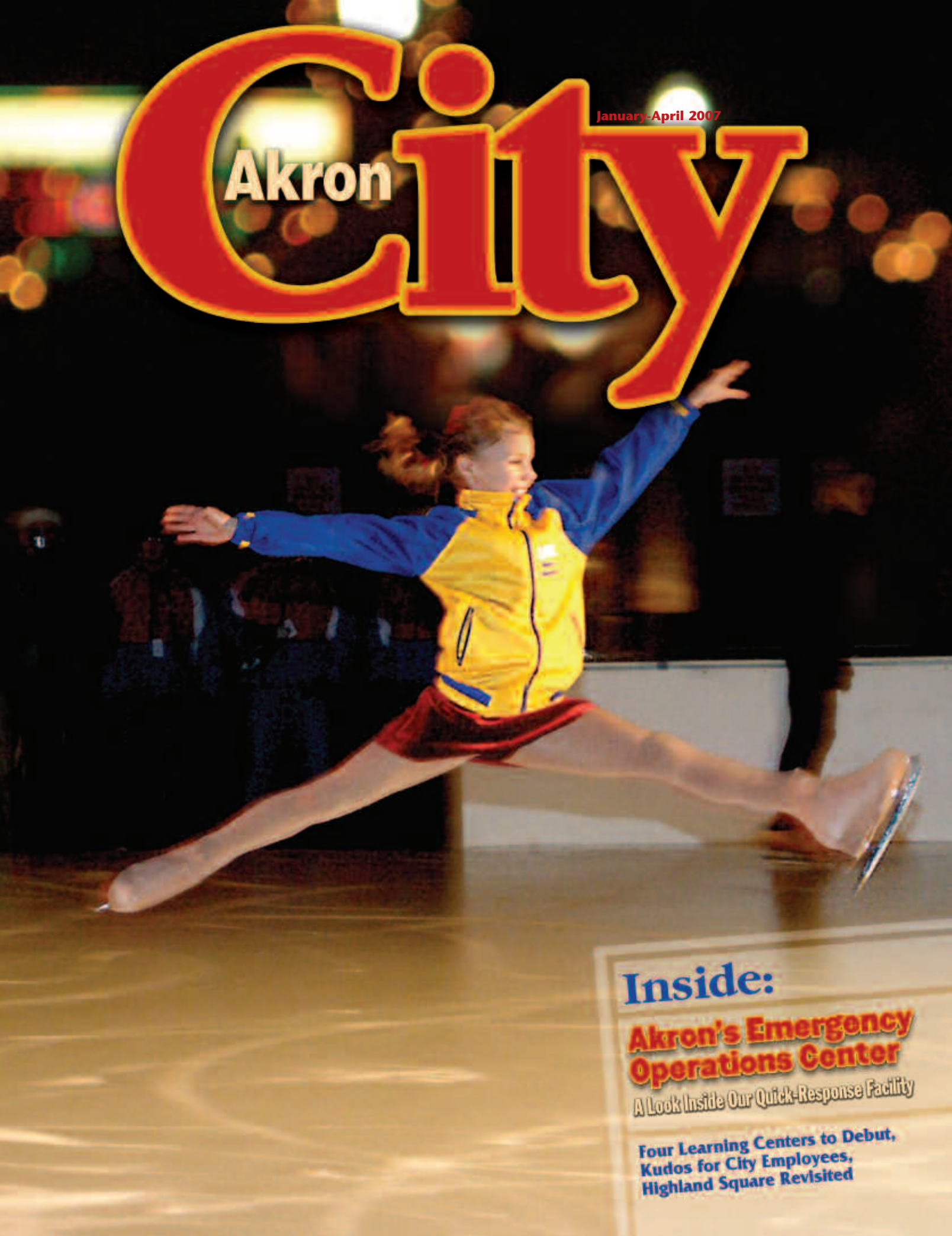


Akron City

January-April 2007



Inside:

Akron's Emergency Operations Center

A Look Inside Our Quick-Response Facility

Four Learning Centers to Debut,
Kudos for City Employees,
Highland Square Revisited

From the Mayor...

Reflecting On Some Good News As We Enter 2007

It's not too often that I take seriously those "popular" rankings of cities in the U.S. for one thing or another. Just when Akron is up in one survey, we may be down in another. But in 2006, Akron received some pretty good news from credible, outside publications:

- The FBI continues to rank Akron as the "safest" large city in Ohio.
- The Center for Community Solutions reported that in northeast Ohio, only greater Akron has experienced jobs growth since the economic recession began in 2000.
- *Expansion Management* magazine continues to place Akron among America's top cities in the amount of European investment made here; and it ranks us among the best for quality of life—where people can enjoy a career and raise a family.
- We are among the top 100 cities for wireless internet accessibility and;
- *Inc.* magazine says Akron is among the top 25 cities for doing business in the U.S.

Every day, we see signs of good health in our local economy and in our quality of life. Be assured, we're not resting on our laurels. We know from past experience that "Job #1" for us every day is to make Akron a welcoming place to do business, and to create jobs for the next generation. Our neighborhoods are prospering too, and we've been recognized this year for our new housing developments (see page 10).

Speaking Of The 'Next Generation'

If we've learned one thing, it is that the jobs of tomorrow are going to be created by people who are in their late

20s and early 30s today. Along with the Greater Akron Chamber, the City has made a substantial investment in understanding what will attract young professionals to Akron and what will help us retain our college-educated people who like the quality of life here (in contrast to the "brain drain" the state of Ohio has seen in the last 20 years.)

Akron's New Art Museum: A Symbol For Our Future

In October, I spoke to a group of two dozen reporters in New York City, assembled by the Akron Art Museum to hear about the Museum's opening in July, 2007. It was our chance to tell the Akron story to *Newsweek*, *The New York Times*, *Architectural Digest*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, and dozens of other publications geared towards travel, leisure, art, and architecture.

What is exciting about the new Akron Art Museum is exactly what is exciting about living in Akron, and why Akron will be a magnet for the new groups of "knowledge workers" who will create the jobs for our children and grandchildren in Akron. As examples:

Akron is a Center of Innovation—Architect Wolf Prix has designed buildings throughout Europe and Asia. His first work in the United States is in downtown Akron! It's safe to say that in a world of big-boxes and look-alike office buildings, there is no building anywhere that looks like the Akron Art Museum.

Akron is home to technologies of the Future—The Museum's 300-foot long cantilevered roof weighs 400 tons. Local contractors and tradesmen responsible for executing Prix's 21st Century design used

global-positioning satellite technology to ensure that every piece was in the right place. In addition, engineers used cutting-edge 3-D computer programs to create a "virtual" model of the construction before the first bolt was attached.

Akron is a Generous community—I've known this for years, after seeing the success of our drives to support victims of 9-11 and Hurricane Katrina. That the Museum has raised more than \$40 million to support the construction and operation of this new building speaks to how Akron values the arts and our quality of life.

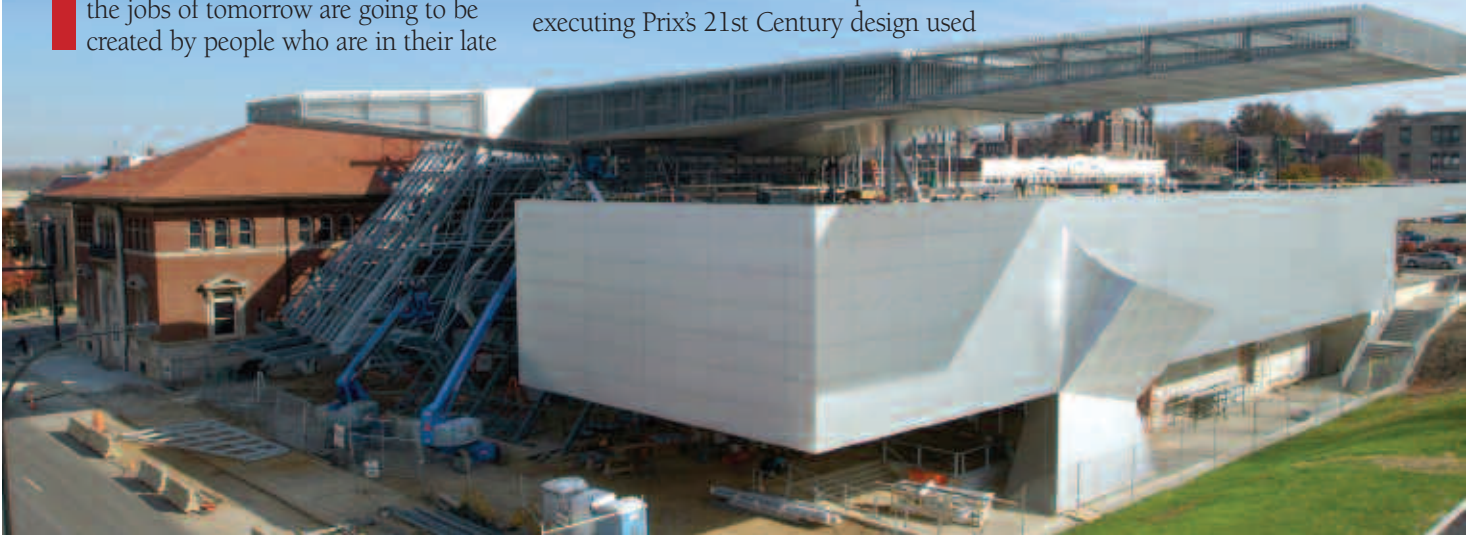
Akron is a community that embraces its Past—The steel armature designed by Prix—the "Roof Cloud"—hugs Akron's 1899 Post Office that has been home to the Art Museum since 1981. Preserving historic buildings is a priority for young professionals, who don't want to live in places that look like every other place.

The New Year is a time to mark new beginnings. For the citizens of Akron, 2007 looks like an extraordinary year as we rebuild our city for the 21st Century. Best wishes to your family for the New Year... see you at First Night! ☺

Donald L. Phlegan



The Akron Art Museum nearing the end of construction. Opening ceremonies are scheduled the second week of July, 2007.



Akron City

Akron City is produced three times a year by the City of Akron Communications Department. The magazine and recycling calendar is distributed by U.S. Mail to all residents of Akron by Keep Akron Beautiful, a not-for-profit corporation in the state of Ohio.

Additional copies of the magazine and recycling calendar are available through the Department of Communications, Mayor's Office, 166 South High Street, Akron, OH 44308.

Our Cover Photo...

...is **Bruce Ford's** photo of a young skater caught in mid-jump. The Lock 3 Ice Rink is the largest seasonal ice rink in Ohio, and this year is open through February 19. For details, go to www.holidayfest.org.

Tell us what you think by replying to editor@ci.akron.oh.us

Or share your thoughts with the mayor at mayor@ci.akron.oh.us

Published by the City of Akron Department of Communications, Mark Williamson, director.

Publication services provided by Live Publishing Company.

Editor	Dave Lieberth
Photographer	Bruce Ford
Art Direction & Design	Blink Concept & Design, Inc.
Contributors	Robert Sberna Russ Musarra Chuck Ayers Dave Lieberth Mark Williamson Billy Soule

Distributed by Keep Akron Beautiful, a not-for-profit corporation, Paula Davis, director.
850 E. Market Street
330-375-2116
e-mail: KeepAkronBeautiful@ci.akron.oh.us

Table of Contents

4 Fairlawn Heights & Northwest Akron

Steeped in Tradition



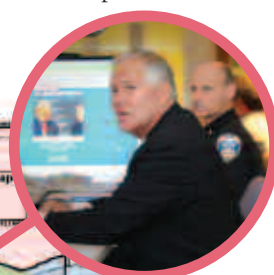
5 Rx for Success

Sand Run Pharmacy Dispenses Old-Time Service



6 Emergency Operations

City, County Coordinate Disaster Response



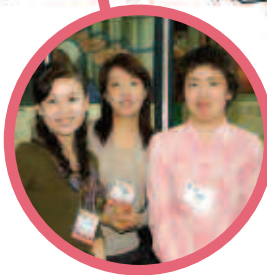
8 This is Akron

Highland Square, Hamburgers, 9-11, and More



11

Community Learning Centers set to open in '07



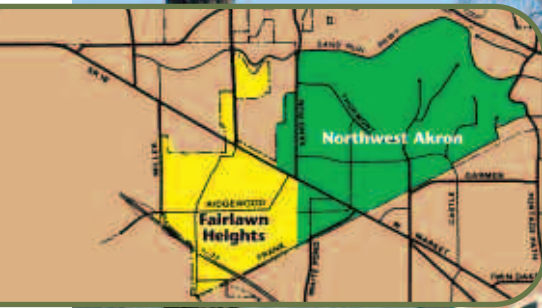
12 Preserving Our History

Old buildings new again

14 2006 ITEC

City Hosts Global Tire Conference

Neighborhoods Fairlawn Hts. & Northwest Akron



Rotaynah stands watch as the new Judith Resnik Community Learning Center nears completion.

Neighboring Communities Share Seiberling Legacy

Robert Sberna

Established in the early 1900's, the neighborhoods of Northwest Akron and Fairlawn Heights share a common legacy: Northwest Akron is the site of Goodyear founder F. A. Seiberling's Stan Hywet estate, while Fairlawn Heights was developed by Seiberling as a pastoral community for rising business executives and their families.

Like many other executives and professionals at the turn of the 20th century, Seiberling migrated to the Northwest Akron area because of its wooded, rolling terrain and its distance from the smoke and soot of downtown's rubber factories.

Stan Hywet, a 65-room Tudor Revival manor house that originally occupied 1,000 acres off Portage Path, was completed in 1915. Seiberling's Northwest Akron neighbors at the time included Harvey Firestone and Michael O'Neil, a founder of General Tire & Rubber.

After World War II, much of Stan Hywet's acreage was sold off for nearby residential development. Northwest Akron now includes a spectrum of homes, ranging from upscale to affordable and some subsidized housing. "The neighborhood is pretty diversified these days," says Bob Keith, who represents the area as Ward 8 Councilman.

"It's a stable, middle-class area that includes working people, professionals, and a good mix of independently owned retail businesses."

Among the neighborhood's attributes, Keith cites its easy access to downtown, Sand Run Park, and a recently constructed library and recreation center. Landmarks include Stan Hywet and Rotaynah, a 30-foot American Indian carved from a red oak by former Akronite Peter Toth in 1985. Rotaynah stands in front of the old Fairlawn Elementary School on West Market Street. In 2007, the new Judith A. Resnik Elementary School will open on that site. Resnik, an astronaut who died in the Space Shuttle Challenger disaster, attended Fairlawn.

Just to the west of Northwest Akron is



The Northwest Community Center and Library on Shatto


Fairlawn Heights, a 132-acre community of winding lanes, elegant homes, and large lots. "Fairlawn Heights has historically been home to corporate leaders, doctors, bankers



"Fairlawn Heights ... is still an affluent area with high-end homes and a 'country' feeling. There are no streetlights and no sidewalks, and the residents want to keep it that way. That's part of the neighborhood's mystique."

—Bob Keith, Ward 8 Councilman

and attorneys," says Keith. "These days, it's still an affluent area with high-end homes and a 'country' feeling. There are no streetlights and no sidewalks, and the residents want to keep it that way. That's part of the neighborhood's mystique."

From 1940 – 1980, Fairlawn Heights experienced a surge of residential development. At present, more than 80 percent of homes are owner-occupied, the highest rate in the city, notes John V. Frank, former Ward 8 Councilman. "Fairlawn Heights is suburbia within the city. It's a very well-maintained area that has a combination of upper-class and middle-class homes and some of the highest real estate values in Akron." 

Customer Service is Dispensed at Sand Run Pharmacy

Robert Sberna

In an era when some chain pharmacies seem to be merely pill dispensers, Sand Run Pharmacy is continuing its tradition of providing personalized service to its customers.

Established in the mid-1950s, Sand Run Pharmacy was purchased in 1989 by Tom and Meg Lamb, a married couple who met while attending Ohio Northern University's pharmacy school.

Just like the antique apothecary jars, scales, and mortar and pestle on display at their store, the Lamb's commitment to their customers is somewhat of a throwback to a bygone time. "Our store still has an old-fashioned feel about it," notes Meg. "We know a lot of our customers' names and we have kids come down here after school to get a piece of candy or a slush puppy."

Tom oversees the day-to-day business operations, while Meg's focus is prescription compounding, immunizations, and diabetes education. Situated just off West Market Street on Sand Run Road, the pharmacy has become known for its wide range of durable medical equipment such as lift chairs, wheelchairs, walkers and other assistive devices. "We specialize in helping people to choose the right item," Meg explains, adding that Sand Run delivers prescriptions and equipment to customers' homes and assisted living facilities.

As advocates for their profession, the Lambs regularly host pharmacy students at their store for one-month internships. "When the students are here observing, we tell them it's important that they do more than just stand behind the counter and dispense pills,"

Meg says. "We tell them they need to get to know their customers. Part of being a community pharmacist is showing a customer how to use a blood glucose monitor or helping a person to choose a walker or the right compression stockings."

Along with in-store services, Meg and Tom are active in community outreach such as coordinating flu vaccine clinics at various spots in the City including workplaces and AMHA housing sites. "We enjoy the people aspect of pharmacy," Meg says. "Some pharmacists don't have a comfort level of coming out from behind the counter. They can go to school and memorize drugs and do well on their school tests, but there's more to being a pharmacist than book knowledge. People want a personal touch. That's our niche." ©



Neighborhoods

West Akron



Barbara and Steve Talevich at West Side Bakery

West Side Bakery is a Neighborhood Institution

Robert Sberna

A West Akron institution since 1994, the West Side Bakery has gained a devoted following for its pastries, made-from-scratch lunches, and artistic special occasion cakes.

Located on West Market Street in Pilgrim Square, the bakery is decorated in an old-world European style and staffed by friendly employees. "Without great customer service, a small business can't survive," says owner Barbara Talevich.

Prior to opening the West Side Bakery with her husband, Steve, Talevich worked for a department store. "When I decided to open this business, I had a young son and I wanted to scale down my work and do something I enjoyed," she explains. "However, the bakery has turned into a beast."

Five years ago, Talevich built an adjacent 2,000 square-foot production kitchen, which provides baked goods to area restaurants.

While Talevich's scones, muffins and coffee are a popular draw for neighborhood residents, her decorated cakes have gained regional renown.

"Wedding cakes have become a huge business for us," she says. "We only hire decorators who have an art background."

Talevich says the bakery has succeeded beyond her expectations. "It's a lot of work, but the reward is when I get a call from someone who tells me how much they liked their wedding cake or birthday cake," she says. "It feels good to create memories for people." ©

Akron/Summit County EOC

Command Center is Ready



When government must respond to major fires, floods, electrical blackouts, snowstorms or other catastrophes, City and county officials gather at Akron City Hall to coordinate their response through the sophisticated Emergency Operations Center or EOC.

When the rain-swollen Cuyahoga River overflowed its banks in 2003, when the area's electrical grid went down blacking out much of the eastern U.S. and Canada in 2004, when uncertainty filled the air on September 11, 2001, Akron's Emergency Operations Center swung into action.

Located on a subterranean level of Akron City Hall (which is built squarely in an old stone quarry), the EOC is the central command and control facility responsible for carrying out all aspects of emergency management—not just for Akron, but for all of Summit County.

The EOC, which was opened in the mid-1990s, is a collaborative effort between the City and the Summit County Emergency Management Agency. Akron's role is coordinated by former Fire Chief and now Deputy Mayor of Public Safety, George Romanoski.

"The City already had an EOC, but in the early 1990s, Summit County was looking for a place to house their operation," says Romanoski. "I suggested that we share the space in City Hall. The partnership has gone smoothly." State law requires all political subdivisions to have an EOC, Romanoski notes.

Resembling a sort of "war room," the 2,000-square-foot center includes a large conference table with two dozen telephones for EOC team members, three televisions, a large-screen monitor, and wall-mounted street maps and evacuation routes.

The nerve center of the EOC is the Emergency Communication Center, which is located in an adjacent room. Through the communication center's switchboard, operators can gather information and relay instructions to supervisory personnel in the field, who are referred to as incident commanders.

An auxiliary diesel-fueled generator provides backup



power for the EOC, which also contains a small kitchen and shower-equipped restroom.

"We can also set up cots when people need to stay around-the-clock," says Romanoski. He adds that, in large-scale emergencies, City Hall's parking garage can be converted to sleeping quarters for up to 20 people.

The EOC is overseen by the Summit County Emergency Management Executive Committee, which includes representatives from the City, county, the township trustees association and mayors association, as well as two citizens at large.

"Most people don't even know the EOC exists, but they should take comfort in knowing that a very functional group works on planning to mitigate, prepare, and respond or recover from any disaster, whether it's a



"Most people don't even know the EOC exists, but they should take comfort in knowing that a very functional group works on planning to mitigate, prepare, and respond or recover from any disaster, whether it's a snowstorm, tornado, pandemic flu or terrorism,"

— Annette Petranic, Summit County Emergency Management Coordinator

for Any Emergency

By Robert Sherma



The EOC's executive group is responsible for preparing an action plan during a disaster scenario. "As an example, let's say there's a train derailment that is emitting chemicals," says Romanoski. "We would begin gathering information to determine if the chemicals are toxic and whether we need to evacuate people."

Romanoski is proud of the collaboration that has created standardized radio communications throughout the county. "We're now using a state-of-the-art digital system that give us greater capacity and a stronger signal," he says.




At present, about half of the political subdivisions in the county are linked to the digital system.

In the not so distant past, when City fire and police

crews needed emergency assistance from neighboring communities, they would communicate through their dispatchers, who relayed information from on-scene personnel. "If we had to call in help from another city, we didn't have a way of communicating with them," recalls Romanoski. "For example, if we needed an additional fire truck, we would radio our dispatchers, and they would use their telephone to call a dispatcher in another city to ask for assistance."

The EOC is primarily funded through its participating communities via a per capita tax. According to Gus Hall, deputy chief of the Akron Police Department, the EOC provides a measure of cost savings to the county taxpayers. "By coordinating the emergency management process, we can all do our jobs more efficiently and in a more timely manner," says Hall.

Petrican adds, "We take it for granted that the City of Akron and Summit County have a great working relationship, but these relationships are not all that common." 

snowstorm, tornado, pandemic flu or terrorism," says Annette Petranic, the Summit County Emergency Management Coordinator.

Operationally, the EOC provides a "big picture" perspective of emergency situations and leaves tactical decisions to the on-scene incident commanders. Serving as a clearinghouse for information and resources, the EOC enables the incident commanders to focus on their tasks and not worry about where pumper trucks, ambulances, police barricades, and other resources are coming from.



Along with facilitating instantaneous communication among emergency personnel, the EOC also ensures that the public and media organizations have accurate, timely information about emergency situations from the Joint Public Information Center, which is housed on the third floor of City Hall.

"It's the EOC's job to figure out what the incident commanders need and to get those resources to them," says Rob Ross, Deputy Fire Chief of Akron. "The EOC ensures efficiency, prevents duplication, and ensures flow of accurate information."

"It's the EOC's job to figure out what the incident commanders need and to get those resources to them. The EOC ensures efficiency, prevents duplication, and ensures flow of accurate information."

— Rob Ross, deputy fire chief of Akron

This is



First Night 2007 will be filled with surprises, including this live "Jack-in-the-box," who makes his inaugural appearance with First Night Director Sarah Steidl looking on. Jack is looking for the "magic" that he lost, and hopes to find, by the time opening ceremonies occur on December 31 at 4:45 pm at Lock 3. Mayor Plusquellic hosted students from Hyre Middle School (left) who are creating one of 40 banners that will count down the days to First Night at Lock 3 during Holidayfest.



On September 11, Akron paused to remember the victims of 9-11, honor the men and women in our armed forces, and offer prayers for peace. Akron's Police and Fire Honor Guard carried the colors to St. Bernard's Church while expressions for peace were offered by Mohammad Ismail of the Islamic Center (top left); Rabbi Stephen Grundfast (left center); Bishop Joey Johnson (top right); and APD chaplain Robert Denton (right center). Adam Sarata, guitarist (far right) provided a reflection.



AKRON

Photos by Bruce Ford



It took a village to wield the giant shovel made by artist P.R. Miller at the groundbreaking ceremonies for Highland Square's new Library and Retail Center. Three young members of the Library reading club helped the team, which included (clockwise) Trustees Lolita Adair, Sandy Auburn and Jim Switzer; resident Stephen Brooks; Akron Councilman Bob Keith; Joe Albrecht, of Albrecht, Inc.; FirstMerit President Nick Browning; Mayor Plusquellic; Library Trustee Frank Comunale and Library Director David Jennings.



The legacy of the Knight brothers continues to benefit Akron. Knight Foundation President Alberto Ibarguen (center) addressed the Akron Roundtable in October announcing gifts of \$2 million to the Art Museum and \$10 million to University Park Alliance. Joining in the ceremony were (left to right) Beverly Knight Olson, Dr. Mitchell Kahan, Mayor Plusquellic, Ibarguen, Foundation Chairman Dr. Gerald Austen, University of Akron President Luis Proenza, UPA Director Ken Stapleton, and Roundtable President Marie Covington.



Akron hosted America's first-ever National Hamburger Festival on South Main Street with thousands of burgers served, a beauty contest, (lower right) a 'bobbing for burgers' contest, (center) and the Hamburger Hearings which pitted four cities in a "trial" presided over by real-life Judge James Murphy (above right). Seymour, Wisconsin outvoted Akron to claim "Home of the Hamburger" bragging rights.





Accomplishments & Accolades

For City Employees

The year 2006 again marked 12 months of accomplishment for City of Akron managers and their employees.

In the Department of Health, two Health Education Specialists in the Division of Community Health Assessment and Health Promotion won accolades for their efforts.

Karla Wilkinson developed a program



Karla Wilkinson, Mike Smylie and Jane Trinter

to decrease the risks of falls and other unintentional injuries among older adults. She helped assemble a coalition of partners throughout the county, and in May, her work was highlighted in a publication of the National Association of County and City Health Officials. She was invited to participate in a conference in Washington with professionals from around the country to discuss future directions of injury prevention.

Jane Trinter, who works with the Health Department's Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention, headed the 4th Annual Healthy Baby Fair, sponsored this year by Akron General Medical Center at the John S. Knight Center. The event has grown both in number of exhibitors and attendance every year.

And Deputy Director of Health **Michael Smylie** was presented the Dr. C. William Keck Community Medicine Award in

September by Akron Community Health Resources.

★★★★★

Keeping Akron even more beautiful are **Jon Malish** and **Ken Morrow**, who both earned their Ohio Certified Nursery Technician certificate from the Ohio Nursery and Landscape Association. Jon also was certified by the International Society of Arboriculture, an award presented to only seven individuals nationwide.

★★★★★

In Akron's Engineering Bureau, **Genny Hanna** completed her term as 2006 president of the Akron Chapter of the American Society of Civil Engineers.

Tish Jernigan and **Jason Harris** passed the Professional Engineer exam and received their engineer license. **Phil Vukoder** and **Don Vardon** passed the Professional



Dave Celik and Genny Hanna

Surveyor exam and received their surveyor license, and Vardon also received a Master of Science Degree in Geography/ Geographic

Information Sciences.

Dave Celik is the 2006-07 chairman of the Engineering Alumni Board at the University of Akron. And on a lighter note, for the 10th consecutive year, **Mike Madonio**, Manager of the Design Division in AEB finished in last place at the annual ASCE golf outing.

★★★★★

New, affordable housing in Akron's central city won accolades from the Smart Growth Education Foundation representing an 11- county area of Northeast Ohio.

Planning Director **Warren Woolford** and Comprehensive Planning Manager **Jerry Egan** were recognized for their participation in AMHA's Cascade Village development, which was named "Best of Show," and the Hickory Street development launched by Canal Town Builders, and complemented by the city's investments in the Hickory neighborhood.

★★★★★

A significant Personnel accomplishment in managing injury claims by employees resulted in Akron receiving the 2006 *Best Practices Award* from the International Public Management Association for Human Resources. The award, which honored the City's "Transitional Work Program," was presented in Milwaukee in June to **Mark McLeod**, Employee Benefits Manager. McLeod helped form a joint union-management task force to develop the transitional work program aimed at returning an injured worker with temporary physical restrictions back to their original jobs, while they rehabilitate.

★★★★★

Akron Police Detective **Eric Paull** graduated from the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California, receiving a Master of Arts degree in Security Studies (Homeland Security and Defense) following 18 months of study. Detective Paull's expertise will be used to better serve the citizens of Akron in the planning for hometown security.



Eric Paull

Police Lt. **Chip Westfall** graduated from the FBI National Academy in Quantico, Virginia, an 11-week program emphasizing police leadership and management skills. 

First Community Learning Centers to Open in 2007

The City's long-range plan to transform all of Akron's school buildings into Community Learning Centers is underway, with the first four CLCs scheduled to open this year.

Three of the new buildings — Judith Resnik (Fairlawn School), Voris, and David Hill — will replace existing elementary schools, while the Helen Arnold Community Learning Center is a new elementary school that is being built in conjunction with the new home of the Akron Urban League.

The 15-year initiative, which is known as Imagine Akron Community Learning Centers, aims to remodel or rebuild every Akron school building into multi-purpose facilities. During regular school hours, the buildings will serve as modern, well-equipped academic institutions. After school, on weekends and during the summer, the CLCs can be used for recreation, adult education, and a wide spectrum of community activities.

"We're very excited about this project," says Laraine Duncan, Deputy Mayor for Intergovernmental Relations. "While the CLCs are first and foremost educational facilities, I'm optimistic that people will find all kinds of other uses for them. I think that residents will come to regard the centers as neighborhood gathering places."

The cost of the plan, which is divided into four segments, is projected to be more than \$800 million, and is part of the Rebuild Ohio plan to renovate or rebuild the state's 612 school districts. The state contributes 59 percent of construction costs and each school district is required to come up with remainder.

Most Ohio districts levied new property taxes to raise the money, but Mayor Don Plusquellic came up with the idea of using a new income tax, dedicated solely to construction of Community Learning Centers, to generate the matching funds.

Duncan, who is overseeing the school rebuilding project for the Mayor, works closely with Akron Public School officials. "Only about 20 percent of Akron residents have children in the public schools," she



Helen Arnold Community Learning Center in the Lane-Wooster neighborhood (top) and the new Voris CLC in Firestone Park (bottom) will be completed in 2007, ready to host students and neighborhood residents as the first buildings open for business in Akron's 15-year program.



says, "But everyone in the community understands the importance of educating our children." Duncan says that if neighborhood residents use the buildings, they will feel more ownership and will have more of a reason to care about the schools.


For every CLC that goes up, there are a series of community meetings at which all residents are welcome to provide input. Duncan notes, "We're interested in working with community groups to get their ideas about uses for the CLC. Some of the suggested activities are needlework and embroidery, book clubs, basketball, and exercise classes. We're counting on these buildings to be catalysts for other renovation in the neighborhood."

Other City employees assigned to the CLC project include Mark Moore, senior engineer and assistant construction manager, and Tom Long, the City's design administrator.

The first CLCs scheduled to open are

"While the CLCs are first and foremost educational facilities, I'm optimistic that people will find all kinds of other uses for them. (And)... residents will come to regard the centers as neighborhood gathering places."

—Laraine Duncan, Deputy Mayor for Intergovernmental Relations.

Judith Resnik (winter 2007), which replaces the Fairlawn school at 65 N. Meadowcroft Dr.; David Hill (summer 2007), 1065 Austin Ave.; Helen Arnold (fall 2007), located at Vernon Odom Boulevard and Rhodes Avenue; and Voris (winter 2007), located just south of Firestone Park. 

History

New Art Museum Bridges Past

Celebrating Our Progress; Treasuring Our Heritage

by Dave Lieberth

When Akron's new Art Museum opens in July, the world will see how we value our history, since the modern facility literally embraces the 1899 Post Office Building—giving new life to a landmark structure that's in its third century of existence.

The new Museum, which was designed by world-renowned architect Wolf Pritz, exemplifies the concept of "Power of Place," the importance of living in a community with a character of its own, one that relieves us from the cookie-cutter culture of so many malls and lifestyle centers along America's interstate highways.

In the past two decades, the City of Akron has helped preserve some 55 different properties that give Akron our unique sense of Place.

Photo of Wolf Pritz courtesy of Aleksandra Pawloff



2007 will see the start of work on **THE RICHARD HOWE HOUSE** on East Exchange at High Streets, the oldest brick structure in Akron. Soon to be the headquarters of the Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition, the home was built in 1836 by the engineer who helped lay out the Ohio & Erie Canal and configured Summit Lake with its unique floating towpath. Howe designed the 15-step lift locks that are now part of Cascade Locks Park, and later oversaw construction of the Summit County Courthouse and Jail. This was home to Summit County's sheriff in 1875, and later Akron's legendary police chief, John Durkin. Most people remember the structure as the Ohio Gold Store, or as a tattoo parlor when the Downtown area was down on its luck.

In August, the OECC held a ceremony at the house (left) to announce that of its \$1.5 million goal, over \$1 million has been raised to renovate the structure.



Have you been inside the AES Building on South Main to see the soaring atrium where rubber products once traveled along conveyor belts?



Do you love what Tony Troppe has done at Main and Market to the Everett, the United, the Nantucket, the Hermes Building, and Castle Hall?



Have you seen the new café at Polsky's? Or walked into the breathtaking atrium on the 6th floor of the O'Neil's Building?




Did you take the *History Trails* Tour of our Depression-era buildings this summer and celebrate the 75th anniversaries of FirstMerit Tower, the YMCA, the YWCA, the Mayflower Hotel, and the Fulton Airport Terminal?



Akron's most prolific architect, Frank Weary, designed **THE GOTHIC BUILDING** in 1888, recently home to All-Ohio Sports, but known to a previous generation as Edfred's Record Store. Weary also designed the Carnegie Library on East Market, Buchtel Hall at the University of Akron, the Civil War Chapel at Glendale Cemetery, and many other landmarks. The Gothic Building, with its striking orange brickwork and Tudor-style arches is slated for new life with an adaptive re-use on Mill Street between Main and High.

Maybe 2007 will be the year that Chrissie Hynde (just one of Akron's contributions to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum) will write a new song about her hometown. "My City Was Gone" chronicled the 1960's destruction of Howard Street, and the Pretenders' "Downtown (Akron)" recalls the Portage Hotel in a grittier time when we were a smokestack city.

Akron's architecture—unique and authentic—deserves to be celebrated again. 



The City will be working with private developers in 2007 to improve the **five structures along South Main Street** between the Civic Theatre and the Landmark Building, and if possible, preserve this line of historic facades. The City hopes to attract new restaurants, offices, and – perhaps – residences. This spring, an adjacent parking deck will be demolished on Bowery Street, opening up the Ohio & Erie Canal in this area for the first time in a century.



A Work in Progress

By Russ Musarra / Illustration by Chuck Ayers

It was all familiar territory. The construction sites along West Market Street in Akron's Highland Square are just a short walk from artist Chuck Ayers' studio, which is across the street from Portage Path School. He also lives in the neighborhood.

But as we've learned over the last 20 years, even the most familiar things in our lives change. Highland Square, with its new West Hill Library branch and the neighboring Albrecht Inc. project—a \$1.5 million grocery store and \$1.2 million retail complex—are a case in point.

Workers seemed to be everywhere. They were pouring, spreading and smoothing cement in long rectangular holes in West Market, part of the city's contribution of \$2 million in parking and street improvements.

Others were toiling on the roof of the Albrecht complex at Market and Conger Avenue, where the Star Market stood for years. Still others were felling and grinding trees just north of the library site, where


off-street parking is being created for the library and Albrecht's tenants.

Our walk around Highland Square represented a milestone for us—the 20th anniversary of this feature, which debuted in the *Akron Beacon Journal's Sunday* magazine in March 1987, just seven months before *Crankshaft*, the comic strip Chuck draws in partnership with Tom Batiuk, began in newspapers across the nation. Coincidentally, a retrospective of our walks around the community is being published this spring by the University of Akron Press. The book is titled *Walks Around Akron: Rediscovering a City in Transition*.

Transition is what we tried to capture in this visit to Highland Square.

In 1997, for an essay headlined *Triangulating a Square*, we concentrated on Portage Path School and its sculpted Indian depictions—the newest created by artist Don Drumm in 1973—and the much older heads above the school entrances.

Now, nearly 10 years later, we were back. This time we focused on a soon-to-disappear piece of North Highland Avenue—the section that runs off Market to Dopler Avenue. It is being vacated so the new library branch can stretch westward from the old branch site. At 12,000 square feet, the new branch will be three times the size of the building it replaces. Its cost will be \$2.15 million, compared with the \$108,850 price tag for the 1956 version, which replaced the original branch established in 1930 in a Highland Square home.

The new library, which will retain the address 807 West Market St., is expected to be completed in the spring. The Albrecht project should be ready in June. We left promising ourselves at least one more visit to see how it all comes out. We hope you'll join us. 

Russ Musarra may be reached at rmusarra@neo.rr.com.



2006 International Tire Event Brings World to Akron

Akron is the tire technology capital of the world—and proves it every two years, as companies from around the globe come to the John S. Knight Center for ITEC, the International Tire Exhibition and Conference.

The 2006 ITEC attracted more than 2,000 scientists and engineers representing suppliers and manufacturers from Europe, China, India, Vietnam and other areas of the world.

Crain Publications' *Rubber & Plastics News* sponsors ITEC, which started in 1994. According to estimates by the Akron-Summit Convention & Visitors Bureau, ITEC pumps \$1 million into the Akron-area economy. The ITEC event coincided with the 25th annual conference on tire science and technology sponsored by The Tire Society, which is based in Akron. ©

News You Can Use

FirstEnergy/City Program Helps With Home Electrical Upgrades

By Mark Williamson

A partnership between the City of Akron and FirstEnergy Corp. will provide help with repairs and money for residents who live in older homes and want to upgrade their electrical systems.

One of the leading causes of house fires is faulty electrical wiring, especially in older structures. While safety experts say that repairing and upgrading older electrical systems can prevent many house fires, the cost of such repair work can be difficult for financially strapped homeowners.

FirstEnergy has established a fund in each of three years, beginning in 2006, of \$150,000 annually for electrical repairs and upgrades for qualifying City homeowners. Warren Walfish, the City's manager of housing rehabilitation, says the FirstEnergy program will provide "much-needed funds that will help those who do not qualify for the traditional weatherization and housing rehab funding for low-income residents."

FirstEnergy has established a fund in each of three years, beginning in 2006, of \$150,000 annually for electrical repairs and upgrades for qualifying City homeowners.

In general, the City tries to help homeowners who are working but struggling to maintain their homes, along with those with special needs, such as the elderly or disabled.

For these homeowners, the FirstEnergy program is a "great fit," says Delores Jones, FirstEnergy's community initiatives director. "We're pleased to support the

City with this type of program, especially since it helps make people's homes better and safer for their families," Jones says.

The FirstEnergy funds, which will be allocated by the City, will be available to address major electrical safety issues in owner-occupied

structures as long as the income guideline stipulated by FirstEnergy is met.

According to the company's guideline, qualifying homeowners must be at or below 150% of the federal poverty level.

To learn about eligibility for this assistance, call the City's information and referral system at 3-1-1 from any residential phone, or call 330-375-2311. ©

Children Learn How to Respond to Emergencies

A team of volunteers from Akron's 9-1-1 call center regularly visit schools to teach children how to handle emergencies at home. Gloria Beard (bottom left) coordinates a group of 16 Akron dispatchers and call-takers who show children what to do when Police, Fire, or EMS are needed.

"First, we explain to them what is an emergency, and what is not an emergency," Beard says. "Then we ask them to think of a situation when they might need help, and then we practice calling."

State Farm Insurance has provided a simulator phone that is connected to a small computer that asks real-life questions such as "What is your emergency?" and "What is your name and address?" And, most importantly, we tell them to stay on the line until we say, "Hang up," Beard says.

Teachers may schedule a 9-1-1 Awareness presentation by calling 330.375.2454.





by Russ Musarra

FORGING A LINK BETWEEN THE PAST AND THE FUTURE

As 2007 begins, the Cascade Locks Park Association is gearing up the fund-raising portion of its project to create a new park on the site of Ferdinand Schumacher's Cascade Mills at the southwest corner of Howard and North Streets, just north of downtown Akron.

"We're knee-deep in fund-raising," says **BRIDGET GARVIN**, the Association's executive director, adding, "We hope to take bids on the project in 2008."


Association founder and board member **VIRGINIA WOJNO-FORNEY** heads the 15-member planning committee that includes **DAVE WHITED**, Metro Parks Serving Summit County planning chief, who came up with the park's overall design; and Akron artist **CHUCK AYERS**,

whose color drawings illustrate the planned appearance of the park, which will serve as an interactive, educational visitor destination right off the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail.

Others on the planning committee include **TOM LONG**, Akron Design Administrator; **DAN RICE**, Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition president; **LYNN METZGER**, University of Akron anthropology professor; **LINDA WHITMAN**, University of Akron archaeology professor; **CHUCK JONES**, FirstEnergy senior vice president for Energy Delivery & Customer Service; **CANDACE BATES**, Ohio & Erie Canalway Association interpretive specialist; **LISA KING**, also of Metro Parks; **MIKE TEODECKI** of the Akron Engineering Department; and Association representatives **ROWAN MACTAGGART**, **BRUCE NORTON**, **TONY TROPPE** and Garvin.

Anyone wishing to assist on the project or seeking more information may contact Garvin at 330-374-5625 or online at info@cascadelocks.org.

City of Akron Information Systems employee **TINA SIROKI** has been honored by Ashland Theological Seminary as a member of Eta Beta Rho, a national honor society of students of Hebrew Language and Culture. Tina volunteers for "JC's Place," a storefront location that helps those needing temporary assistance by providing clothing and household items.

RON HILL, Prevention Program Coordinator, for the City of Akron Health Department has been notified that the City's Drug Free Universe Program has been chosen to receive the State of Ohio Exemplary Prevention Program Award for 2006. 

EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH

Two members of the Police Detective Bureau and two Engineering Department specialists are the latest to be honored as Akron Employees of the Month for August through November 2006. (My deadline arrived before an announcement was made regarding December.)

Construction Division engineering technician **BARRY PRUITT**, the November honoree, inspects public improvement projects and is responsible for project reports and as-built drawings. In addition to a full workload, he helps train new employees and is always available to answer questions that new inspectors may have. Pruitt joined the Engineering Department staff in July 2001.


October honoree **KATHLEEN HELMSTEDTER** joined the Police Juvenile, Auto Theft and Missing Persons Unit in March 2006 after serving five years in the Detective Bureau's administrative area and one year in the Personnel Department. Helmstedter—known to friends as Kathy—

keeps records and tracks crimes against juveniles as well as car thefts, missing persons and administration of the Juvenile Diversion Program. While quickly learning her new duties, she also reorganized the unit's filing systems. She enjoys family activities with her son, **ERIC**, a University of Akron student, and daughter, **BRANDI**, an Ellet High cheerleader, as well as exercising and attending motorcycle rallies.

BETH METTLE, the September honoree, will mark her 15th anniversary with the Engineering Bureau in May. An Engineering-Design Division applications analyst since 2005, she provides upgrade training for Engineering co-workers and other divisions each year;

orders, sets up and installs all hardware and software in her division; troubleshoots problems, and otherwise keeps the network drives operating efficiently. Mettle is always on the lookout for more efficient ways to utilize technology in her division. She is credited with customizing design software to develop construction drawings in accordance with City standards and

being a leader in establishing and updating the drafting standards manual for in-house projects as well as projects developed by consultants. For fun, Mettle rides her motorcycle, hikes in local parks and participates in sports.

Detective **CRYSTAL BOWEN-CARTER**, the August honoree, became a police officer in 1992. Since joining the Juvenile Unit in February 2002, she has been the lead detective in multiple homicide and juvenile rape investigations. Carter received recognition from the U.S. Marshall's Service for her work, which helped lead to the 2005 capture and conviction of a child rapist who was listed on the U.S. Marshall's 15 Most Wanted list. Carter is highly regarded for her thorough documentation and willingness to help others in their investigations. Away from the job she enjoys working with Akron Public Schools in the Students, Teachers and Officers Mentoring Program; helping at her mother's clothing store, Paulette's Boutique; being involved in Mt. Zion Baptist Church; sewing and playing bingo. 





Art apprentices in the Lock 3 Summer Arts Experience worked with artist P.R. Miller to re-cycle everything from fan blades to kitchen cutlery to make these giant flower sculptures that will be placed along the towpath at Lock 3 Park. Most of the Keep Akron Beautiful flowerscapes throughout the city have their own irrigation system, but this one won't need much watering!

Akron City Magazine was made possible through the generosity of these caring sponsors...

